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A
S E R M O N,

OCCASIONED BY THE
D E A T H

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The Rev. P. SIMSON, A.M.

PREACHED AT THE

Meeting-House in Vicar-Lane, COVENTRY,

JULY 18, 1773.

By J. D A L T O N. K

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FIFTEEN DISCOURSES,
On several Important SUBJECTS;

Preached at COVENTRY,
By J. DALTON.

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the Poultry, and Mr. JOHNSON, in St. Paul's Church-
Yard, London.



JOHN xiv. 28.

If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father.

NOTHING is so suited and pleasing to human nature, as the reciprocating endearments of true friendship. The religion of Jesus, is *designed* and *fitted* to inspire us, with that genuine pure benevolence, which impels us to “love each other, with a pure heart, fervently;” and, “in lowliness of mind, to esteem others better than ourselves.” How lovely is it, when the near and dear *relation*, is also the amiable and kind friend, in whom we repose unbounded confidence, and with whom we have such an heart-interesting sympathy, that *his* joys and sorrows necessarily become *our own*! Such a social intercourse of affections, softens the rigours of affliction; and transfuses a benevolent, rational, and satisfying refinement, thro’ our mutual pleasures. When the affectionate *husband* and *father*, has also been the discreet director and amiable companion;—when the faithful *minister* of Jesus, has, “in all things, shewn
B “ himself

“ himself a pattern of good works,” and evidenced, that he “ naturally cared for the state” of those under his charge :—surely, these things would render him, to his *relations, people and friends*, the delight of their eyes ; and would naturally draw from them, that affectionate language : — “ Beloved, I wish, above all things, “ that thou mayest prosper, and be in health ; “ even as thy *soul* prospereth.” But, my hearers, the most refined and affectionate friendships we can form in this life, carry in them their own causes of vexation and grief. There is a *mortality* in our purest social pleasures, because we ourselves are *mortal*.

When a kind relation, and faithful minister of Jesus, hath glorified God, by accomplishing the domestic and public duties of that sphere, in which he was called to move and shine, as a light of the world ; the God of all grace, allots him an honourary reward ; and Jesus, the great head of his redeemed people, who hath the keys of the invisible world, kindly says to his highly favoured servant, “ Come up hither ;” and commands death to dismiss him from this world of grief and labour, that he may be admitted into the full enjoyment of glory, honour, and immortality. Yet, my friends, how hard and trying is it, to *give up* those, with whom we have had delightful communion in the house of God, and in the duties and relative connections of social life!

Even,

Even, when our amiable christian friends are *evidently* “ a people prepared for the Lord,” we, through those inward attachments which arise from flesh and sense, can scarcely overcome the anguish of corroding grief, because those very qualifications, which *convince* us they are gone to happiness and glory, create within us such affectionate regard, and painful regret, as make the tender workings of *nature*, too strong for the salutary directions and sublime consolations of the gospel; and cause us to fix our eyes, *rather* on what *ourselves* have *lost*, than what our *friends* have *gained*, by the stroke of death.

We, in this assembly, mourn, and have cause to mourn, the loss of one, who was a faithful and exemplary servant of the most high God, and delighted to shew unto men the way of salvation. But were the spirit of this just man made perfect, now to appear before his mourning relations and people, he would doubtless exhort you to repress grief, and indulge the comforts of religion; to restrain your voices from weeping, and your eyes from tears; and shew your affections unto him, by rejoicing that he is gone to his heavenly Father.

If *ever* there was pure friendship on earth, it *must* have subsisted between Jesus, who was *love itself*, and his highly favoured disciples. He knew that the hour of his sufferings, and of his departure from them, was at hand; and plainly

tells them of these things, as of events which must *soon* take place. Their *affections* and *sorrows* seem to have arisen to an equal height; they, doubtless, could not refrain from tears, and the most moving indications of their inward grief. The blessed Saviour says therefore, with kind compassion, — “ Let not your hearts be troubled.”—He gives them a *variety* of reasons, suited to convince them, how much his *absence* from them would conduce to their *security* and *benefit*. Still, their affection was so great, that even the thoughts of that protection, and those blessings he *would* afford them, could not abate their grief. Their love to him seems to have been *increased* thereby; and their *sorrow*, at the thoughts of parting with so kind and wise a teacher, and so dear a friend, could not but be increased likewise. In these afflictions, which the disciples endured, their sympathising Saviour was tenderly afflicted. He does not *harshly reprove* them, but, with majestic self-possession, shews his compassion and affection for them, by appealing even to their own *feelings*; and convincing them, that their *love* should *rather* exert itself in joy on *his account*, than in *grieving* for their *own loss*. He had *before* told them, that though he departed, he would come again unto them: but even *this*, could not *silence* their affectionate lamentations. He, therefore, condescendingly bears with them, as one who was

“ touched

“ touched with a feeling of their infirmities.” He, with conjoined tenderness and wisdom, even appeals to the purity and sincerity of *their* love for him, and shews, that their sorrows for his absence, should be *banished*, and *succeeded* by such joy, as arose from the thoughts of his happiness and glory:—He says, “ If ye loved me, “ ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto “ the Father.”

From these words, we may naturally deduce the following doctrinal observation, *viz.* — When we think, respecting any dear departed friends, that they are gone to the Father, we should *strive* to shew the *sincerity* of our love for them, by *rejoicing* on account of that glory and felicity, which we hope they enjoy in heaven.

I shall now expect your serious attention to the two following propositions.

First, At death, a true christian goes from this world to the Father.

Secondly, We should shew our love, to departed christian friends, by rejoicing on this account.

First,

First, At death, a true christian goes from this world to the Father,

The adorable Jesus asks our attention and trust, as "the beloved *son*, in whom God is "well pleased." E'er time began, he consented, in the great council of redemption, to "bring *many sons* to glory;" and was therefore viewed, by the prophet *Isaiab*, as the great father of the future age (or gospel dispensation), who should "gather, into one body, all the children of God, who were scattered abroad." Unto Jesus, the children of God are *now gathered*, and *united* by faith; and, in the fulness of time, they shall all be *gathered* and *united* unto him, in the realms of glory. Hence our blessed Saviour's language, just before his ascension, "I go to *my* father, and *your* father; to *my* God, "and *your* God." "Forasmuch as the children, "whom God determined to save, were partakers "of flesh and blood, Christ also took part of "the same," that as the great *elder brother*, he, by the right of *primogeniture*, might be our representative; and redeem us, by his atonement and power, from "the present evil world," according to the will of God, even our Father. As the *representative* of his brethren, he now wears human nature in the heavenly world, hereby affording a *pledge*, yea, an *undoubted assurance*, that all, who are united to him, shall partake of his hap-

happinefs : they fhall be *heirs* of God, becaufe *co-heirs* with Jefus Chrift. When he fees that they (like himfelf) have “ finished the work “ which the Father gave them to do” on earth; he *mercifully* comes unto them, at the hour of death, and “ receives them to himfelf,” that “ where he is, they may be alfo.” Our exalted Jefus receives the departed *fpirits* of his brethren, and “ presents them faultlefs before the throne “ of his glory,” as one who can fay with joy, upon *every* frefh addition to the number of his glorified people, — “ Behold me, and the children thou haft given me.” The *soul* of *every* good man, is prefented by his exalted Redeemer before the Father, as *a fpirit made perfect*. Well therefore may a believer filence the repining murmurs of diftreff, by uttering, in the exercife of faith, the following fublime and triumphant language : — As for me, I fhall behold thy face in righteoufnefs ! This animating hope divelts death of all its gloomy terrors ; the affectionate chriitian may even *fmile* on its approach, and fee with joy, that “ a bleffing is in it.” Chriftians (like Chrift, their great redeemer and example) go from this world to the Father, that they may be clothed with light and glory, and enjoy pleafures for evermore. Through faith, which unites them unto Jefus, they are *now* the acknowledged children of the kingdom. Their names are enrolled in heaven. God is not
afhamed

ashamed to be called *their* God, for he hath prepared for them a city; and they shall never, no *never* be disfranchised. At death, they are taken to *enjoy* all the privileges and bliss thereof, as their *inheritance*. From the lips of Jesus, they have *this* invitation, to take their respective seats in glory:—"Come, ye blessed of my Father, *inherit* the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

What immense raptures fill the souls of those who are presented, by their great elder brother, with acceptance, before *his* father, and *their* father, *his* God, and *their* God! Surely they *thus* appear before the presence of the divine glory, "with *exceeding* joy." The *soul*, dismissed from the pains and wearying agonies of this mortal flesh, sees with joy those ministring angels, who are commissioned to guard it through the dominions of the prince of the power of the air; and can *begin* the bliss of heaven, by holding communion with them, being itself a *kindred spirit*. To be led by these benevolent spirits, through the everlasting gates, into heaven:—to be *there* welcomed and congratulated, by affectionate christians, who have arrived before us:—to be favoured with the sight and smiles of Jesus, and *confessed* by him before his Father, is such a vast *weight* of glory, that humanity faints even under the very *idea* of it, in the present state of imperfection. How *soothing*, yea, *transporting*

transporting is it to remember, that our dear christian friends, whose absence we mourn, are *not lost*, but only *gone*, a short space of time *before* us, unto God, our common father, with whom their souls are “bound up in the bundle of life!” Here on earth, they, amidst their afflictions and pleasures, have said, with lively faith, and ardent longings for full communion with God: — “Whom have I in *heaven* but “*thee!* and there is none on *earth* that I *desire* “in comparison of *thee*.” now these devout wishes are fully satisfied: they are gone to *the Father*, even that blessed and glorious God, unto whom they have prayed without ceasing, and *from* whom they have received so many displays of parental love, all through this mortal life. If the psalmist was filled with so much joy, when he said, concerning his heavenly Father, “He “*shall* receive me;” what super-eminent, what *ineffable* joys must those feel, whom the great eternal God *actually receives!* They *then* approach this blessed and thrice holy being, as their “exceeding joy;” and *experience* the full vast import of that amazing prophecy: “The “Lord will be unto thee an everlasting light; “and thy God, thy *glory*.”

Though our hearts bleed with inward anguish, when our dear friends and relations are taken from us; though we are ready to say, when we see one, whom we love, fainting under the agonies

of death,—“ Let *us* also go, that we may die “ with him;” though our *ears* and *souls* are affected by those deep and heavy groans, which are drawn from the labouring heart; yet, if we have faith in exercise, we may even then hear the melody of heaven, which, with gentle and assuasive consolation, mitigates the poignancy of dying groans and sighs, by this delightful language: “ Blessed are the dead, that die in the “ Lord, from henceforth; yea, faith the Spirit, “ that they may rest from their labours.” Tho’ the valley of the shadow of death is to a wicked man dark, yea, darkness itself; yet, when we see a good man going through it, the steady eye of faith can see light springing up, from the great Sun of Righteousness; and view the pious believer, who is going to his Father, as one who stands at the very gates of paradise, and is just ready to enter into joys unspeakable, and truly glorious. Shall surviving christian friends, be swallowed up with over-much sorrow then, when they think that he whom they lament, is gone to heaven? Are we persuaded, that death has taken a *true christian*, from this world, unto the Father? *then*, as I proposed to shew,

Secondly, We should *shew* our love to departed christian friends, by rejoicing on this account.

I do

I do not mean, that we are to be *unaffected* under the loss of those, who were *near* and *dear* to us. The joy of our holy religion is not designed to *destroy* affectionate sorrow, but to *correct* it. We must *strive* and *pray*, not to sorrow *as those, who have no hope*. We should be ambitious to *feel* and manifest, that the inward consolations of the gospel delight our souls, even in the multitude of our anxious thoughts within us. Our Saviour never *meant* to prohibit a *reasonable* degree of tender grief, thro' the remembrance of those lovely excellencies, which adorned the tempers and conduct of those whom God hath taken to himself. There *was* a time, when *He* visited the mourning family of a deceased friend, and with gracious complacency regarded the distress of *her*, concerning whom it was said, "She goeth to the grave, to weep there." Nay, we even find *himself* joining with friendly sympathy in the tears of these mourners, for — "JESUS *wept*." We have *cause* to be affected by the death of christian friends, since hereby we lose the benefit and pleasure of society with them in prayer, and the delightful intercourse of mutual esteem. When Paul only *parted* from his friends at Miletus, we read, "they all wept sore, " and fell on his neck, and kissed him; sorrow-
"ing *most of all*, for the words which he spake,
"that they should see his face no more." If it was *amiable* in *these* affectionate christians, to

mourn for a friend who was only leaving them, and *might* yet live thro' many years; surely it is not *culpable* to grieve for the loss of a faithful and affectionate minister of Jesus, whose place that knew him once, must know him now, no more; and who has actually entered into the cold dark silent grave, that house which is appointed for all the living.

We have cause to grieve, when we view death as the fruit of sin, and view the ravages it hath made in the world, ever since it hath set up its kingdom. We cannot but be affected, when we see it asserting its awful empire over the *bodies* of those whom we love, by mortal paleness, ghastliness and corruption, which *force* us to "bury them out of our sight."

We have cause to mourn, that by the death of every saint, the world is impoverished; and the strength and prevailing efficacy of prayer, which ascends to heaven with acceptance, and returns back, laden with blessings to relations, friends, and the whole church of God, are weakened. We have cause to mourn, that we have lost an advocate with God, and at the same time a comforter, example, and friend.

Our blessed Saviour does not *exclude* sorrow, but gives such consolations, as should *moderate* and *refine* it, when we think that our departed friends were heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. Nothing is more *brutish* and *unmanly*,
than

than *want of feeling*. The highest *heroism* of christianity, permits the *manly* tear. It is truly happy and amiable, when it is a tear *in the eye of faith*; then, love to those whom we have lost, will *regulate* our grief, and keep us from the unhappy sorrows of *those*, who mourn, and *refuse to be comforted*.

Our Saviour's language to his disciples, you have seen, is an argument, drawn from their professions of love to him, which is suited to hush the raging storm of grief, and make it gently subside, into calm and tranquil joy; not such joy as arises from the *want* of sensibility, but such as is an happy *proof* of true affection. While we *mourn* for *ourselves*, we may *rejoice* that our dear friends are gone to the Father; and may remember, that hereby we shew *faith* in God, as well as *love* to those, whom he hath mercifully taken to himself. Hereby, we shew such love as is truly noble, scriptural, and rational. Never let it be said, that *self-love* makes us desire our friends back from the glory and felicity they enjoy, and *thus, over-ballances* true affection for them.

My hearers, if we have lost an amiable christian friend or relation, let us reflect, and reason, in some such manner as this:—"Did not the
 " dear deceased person whom we mourn, shew
 " his affection to *us*, by wishing us deliverance
 " from *pain*, and *every kind* of *grief*? Was he
 " not ardently desirous to promote our happiness

"ness and pleasure? How then shall we, in re-
 "turn, manifest *our* kindness to this absent
 "friend, who is not *lost*, but only gone before
 "us, into that bliss, where we hope soon to meet
 "him? His warfare is accomplished: his pil-
 "grimage is over; he has been faithful unto
 "death, and now wears the crown of life; shall
 "we then *dare to wish*, that this perfect bliss
 "had been protracted, *on our account*, for a
 "month, a week, a day, or even an hour? for-
 "bid it faith and gratitude, and every generous
 "feeling! We will strive and pray, to mourn
 "with such grief for *ourselves*, as is tempered
 "with benevolent joy! We are *thankful* for the
 "favours we have *already* enjoyed! We will not
 "charge our God *foolishly*, but say, The Lord
 "gave, and the Lord hath *taken away*; blessed
 "be the name of the Lord."

Does *true affection*, shew itself in sincere desires, that our friends may be delivered from pain and grief? then I observe,

First, We should rejoice, that our departed
 friends, whom we hope are gone to the Father,
 are *now* freed from *every kind* of trouble and
 distress. — No more will the glorified saint be
 pained and grieved by ill usage from his fellow
 creatures. — No more will *sinners* pain him with
 their reproaches, and vex his righteous soul with-
 in him, by their hard speeches against God, and
 their oppositions to his interest in the world. No
 more

more will he be despised and rejected by *wicked* men, nor *pained at the very heart*, by the ingratitude, baseness, and ill usage of those, who *profess* to be *God's own people*. What deep distress do *many* of God's ministering servants often feel, from the malice, pride, obstinacy, and sordid designs of those, to whom they have been *long and faithfully* employed, in breaking the *bread*, and dispensing the *word* of life ! But when the good servant of Jesus, hath once entered into the joy of his Lord, he will no longer complain of *spending* and *being spent*, in the service of ungrateful people ; and that the more he loveth, the less he is loved. In the glorious church above, there is no more pride, envy, or desire of pre-eminence. No more will there be reason to say, " Woe is me " that I dwell in Mesech, and sojourn in the tents " of Kedar. O that I had wings like a dove ! " then would I flee away, and be at rest."

Farther, The Spirit of the just man made perfect, is freed, happily, and *for ever* freed, from all *anxiety* on account of those who were the objects of his tender affection. No more will the good man experience any solicitude, on the account of children or friends, who, after the most pious instructions, and fervent prayers, are yet hardened, ignorant, and far from God. The soul is freed from all anxiety, respecting deliberate schemes and important purposes, pertaining to this present life. No more will the
just

just man made perfect, be called to *weep*, with those who weep through various distresses. The communion of heaven, will be a communion of perfect joy.

We should rejoice, likewise, that our believing friends are now freed from every painful doubt, respecting *their own interest* in the favour of God. In this imperfect state, the *best* of God's dear children, *at sometimes*, are ready to cast away their confidence; and fear, lest they should one day perish. Through the corruptions of human nature, they *often* are led to "do the things they *would not*," and are heard to utter that plaintive language:—"O wretched creature that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death!" But in the kingdom of bliss, all is *certainty*: they see themselves confirmed in the favour of God, as those "who shall go no more out." Every doubt, and every imperfection which *causes* doubt, is banished: the faint, has no more need to watch over sinful propensions, and to complain that his heart is corrupt, desperately wicked, and deceitful above all things. No more will there be any furrounding *temptations*, or any subtle *tempter*, to present them to his view, in all the specious deceivableness of unrighteousness. Nothing which defileth, or worketh abomination, shall enter Christ's happy kingdom: and as there will be no evil *within* the soul, there will be no
external

external evil to fear. No more will the pious soul complain of *following hard* after the Lord, and yet finding, after care, caution, and serious self-examination, that it still cleaves to the dust, and is “as an hungry man, who dreameth, and behold he eateth, but he awaketh, and his soul is empty.” There will be no more need to call upon the dull affections of our souls, to awaken into life and ardor, in holy duties; nor to say, Arise, O my immortal spirit, depart from the *sins* and *low pleasures* of an ensnaring world, this is not thy rest, it is polluted.

What joy should it transfuse through our minds, to think, that our friends and brethren in Christ, who are gone before us, are *now* freed from all the griefs of conscience they endured here, through offending their heavenly Father by sin, or loving their fellow creatures, so as to find themselves *almost* idolators! There will be no more of this in heaven: the love of the blessed to each other, though far *superiour* to what *we* can *conceive*, will doubtless *lead* to God, instead of seducing us from him. No more will the pious soul be grieved, through the thought of having *spoken unadvisedly* with its lips, or of having *cherished* any culpable disposition. No more will the glorified soul mourn, that it hath quenched and grieved God’s holy Spirit, through indolence, presumption, or irreverence in devotion. No more will it grieve, through the

D

thought

thought of having pierced Christ afresh, by sin and unbelief. In heaven, sin, sorrow, doubt, and infelicity, are swallowed up in victory, and there is no more fear of death.

We should rejoice also, that our departed christian friends are freed from those maladies and bodily pains, which caused them, while here in this tabernacle, to groan, being burdened. When we have just seen a christian, *agonized* through the dread conflict with death, how pleasing is it to reflect, that this awful trial now is over! If we have within us any *compassionate tenderness*, it must surely awaken into *joy*, when we think of those whom we love, as being delivered from the fierce pains of their death bed. Those, who are truly saints, and whose death is precious in the sight of the Lord, are not, *always*, *gently* dismissed. Meditate for a moment then on the state of a good man, who is suffered to expire in painful agonies! Cold clammy sweats are violently forced from every pore, hang trembling on the distorted brow, and presage that the faintly beating heart will make but a few, a *very few* more efforts to perform its functions. Medicine can no longer be received; and if it could, would be unavailing. The *damp* respiring breath is *chilled* by mortality. The *wisest*, *kindest* physician, who stands by, at *this hour*, is a physician of *no value*. All *human* help is vain. The kindest friend can only
moisten

moisten the parched lips, or dry away the congealing sweats of death from the pale cheek. The *very compassion* of those, who pity the agonizing distresses of a departing friend, and kindly *help* him to die *with ease*, is *itself* an affliction, as he parts with those who were so *near* and *beloved*. The heart sickens; and the pulsations of the blood become *desultory* and *feeble*. The eyes roll heavily around, and are clouded o'er by gloomy darkness. The once active limbs, are heavy, cold, and torpid. The heart strings break. Mortal paleness takes possession of that countenance, which was once lovely and admired; and, by one *severe, disrupting* pang, the soul is forced from the body, as from a mansion no longer *tenable*. — O how *pleasing* is it to reflect, that the soul, who is with the Father, hath come off conqueror out of all these pains and griefs! and that, in the bright world above, there is no more pain, nor death, nor sorrow, nor crying! God hath wiped away *all tears*; and the griefs, peculiar to this world of sins and sorrows, are passed away.

When we think of those *troubles, distresses, and imperfections*, from which, any dear friend is freed by death, we might *confine* our meditations to *this* part of the subject, and say, “ It is good “ for us to be here !” But, my hearers, we may ascend higher: this leads me to observe,

Secondly, That we should shew our love towards those departed friends who are gone to the Father, by rejoicing that they are not only freed from pain and distress, but favoured with perfect pleasure. How pleasing is it to reflect, that the *spirit* of a good man, has been pronounced righteous, by infinite purity itself, and actually admitted into that presence, where is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore ! It sees *infinite wisdom*, and therefrom *derives* pure and perfect knowledge. It sees *infinite love*, and feels itself filled with unspeakable and refined affection. How *bright* and *strong* must that *knowledge* be, which is *immediately* communicated from the great Father of lights ! How *pure* must that holiness be, which is an immediate emanation from the God of holiness ! How happy is that blessed soul, whose eyes are now opened, to view the dignity and propriety of the divine procedure towards it, and to be *satisfied*, that *every* afflictive dispensation in the present life, was *consistent* with the kind designs of an heavenly Father's grace, who hereby, hath led thro' the wilderness, by a *right* way, to heaven the city of habitations ! In heaven, the *arcana* of nature and providence, will appear naked and open to the admiring view, so that the soul who was *here* often confused, by the mysterious dignity of the divine works and dispensations, now joins the angels, in singing with an enlarged understanding, " Great
" and

“ and marvellous are thy *works*, Lord God Almighty ! just and true are thy ways, O thou “ King of saints !” The spirit of a just man made perfect, is now truly happy, in *knowing* and *contemplating* GOD, the great supreme good ; and can never fear wanting *food* for contemplative love, through the vast progression of eternal ages. In an *infinite* God, there will, after the highest researches, be still those lovely and incomprehensible excellencies *remaining*, which will ever delight the affections, and call forth the renewed contemplations, of *every finite* creature.

Besides, we should rejoice in the felicity of departed friends, because we may be *sure*, they are waiting for us with benevolent pleasure ; and are ready to welcome us into bliss, with the same kindness which was shewn to *them*, by their much loved christian friends, or their venerable ancestors, on *their* entrance into heaven. If the rich man was solicitous that his brethren might not come into the place of torment, surely, good men in glory, may be justly supposed to long for *increasing* joy, on the admission of their friends, who *have* been *as their own soul*, when they shall be commissioned to ascend from earth, and enter paradise.

How should we rejoice to think that our dear departed christian friends, enjoy full communion with *all the saints* who empeople heaven ! Yea, and are delighted to find, that some, who *were* their

their *enemies*, on earth, are their friends in glory; who can unite in forgetting the little vexations, and unkindnesses of life, and in singing, "Unto him who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, be glory." How should it rejoice us, when we reflect, that any dear departed friend, and christian minister, who hath born the heat and burden of the day, in Christ's vineyard, and who *for his name's sake*, hath exercised holy patience, hath laboured and not fainted, is now *graciously* rewarded, for all his faithful services, and knows the full import of that declaration, "To live, is Christ; to die, is gain." We should rejoice, to think that the friends we mourn, now see Jesus; praise him in joyful strains for his redeeming death, and admire those rightful glories, unto which he is exalted. If Jesus is *now* so precious to the saint on earth, when by his gospel, attended with his Spirit, he "speaks words in season, unto those who are weary;" how much *more* lovely must he appear, to the saint who is *dismissed* from the pains, and agonies, and fears of death! How glorious and amiable will Jesus appear to the good man, when as the Lamb in the midst of the throne, he *feedeth* him, with a full knowledge of redeeming grace, and *sanctifies* this knowledge, by leading him to the living fountains of waters, and wiping away all tears from his eyes!

Though

Though the *mortal body* of a departed saint, is covered in the dark and silent grave; yet, his flesh *rests in hope*. The voice of the great archangel, and the trump of God, will awaken those who sleep in Jesus, unto immortal glory: *then*, “death will be swallowed up in victory:” the affectionate soul shall, with joy, inhabit again its former body, now changed, and spiritualized, and fitted for heaven: *then*, will the whole man, soul and body, “be ever with the Lord; wherefore, comfort one another with these words, and “beg of God, to grant you all joy and peace in believing, thro’ the power of the Holy Ghost.”

IMPROVEMENT.

1. From what has been said, let us learn to view death as a good man’s gain; he goes from hence, to the Father. Though the godly man ceaseth *from among the children of men*, he doth not cease to *exist*; but is admitted into that bright and blissful state, which is the proper element of holy souls. Let us then bless and love the Lord Jesus Christ, who hath purchased for us a *right* to this glorious kingdom, by the merit of his precious blood; and who has *prepared* heaven for our reception, by taking human nature into glory, as the *first fruit* of those who slept; and as a *specimen* of what the *whole church* shall be, when their *souls*, which are perfectly pure, shall be united unto *bodies, changed, and fashioned* like unto
his

his own most glorious body, according to the working of that mighty power, whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself. Let us, as dying creatures, constantly *look* to Jesus, and *live* upon him, as our “hope of glory;” for he hath said, “I am the resurrection, and the life;” “he that believeth in me, shall never die.” As you hope to be presented *faultless*, by this Saviour, before the Father, when you *leave* this world, you should delight daily to draw near unto the Father *now*, by *believing* prayer: hereby, you *begin* a communion with God on earth, which shall outlast time, and exist in full force, through the ages of eternity. As *certainly*, as we have followed the remains of our dear friend to the tomb, *so certainly*, must we ourselves taste of death. It *cannot* be *very long*, before *we* shall feel the pains of death encompass us about, and be called to take a *solemn, final* leave, of *our* children, and *our* dearest friends. We *must* either die as the *wicked*, who are driven away in their wickedness; or, as the *righteous*, who have a right to exercise joyful hope, in the view of death. Let it then be the *chief concern* of our souls, to *seek for*, and *evidence* an interest in Christ; that we may be found prepared for death, whenever it is commissioned to present its summons. Read the gospel, with serious prayer, and solemn attentive meditation! Keep up communion, with “your Father who *seeth in secret!*” Be conscientious in attending
on

on the means of grace, and in performing all those duties which are incumbent on you ! Look daily unto Christ, as the atonement and intercessor; the author and finisher of faith ! Quench not the Spirit ! And, whenever any *known* sin tempts you, and solicits to be gratified, dismiss it with an holy abhorrence, as those who remember our blessed Saviour's question, " What will it
 " profit a man, if he gain the *whole world*, and
 " at last, loses his own soul ? Or what can a man
 " give, in *exchange* for *his soul* ?"

2. The solemn stroke of providence, which has caused *so many* to assemble here, at the present time, naturally leads me to address the members of this church and congregation, in a particular manner. You have been highly favoured, by the *ministrations* and *example* of your late honoured Pastor, with whom I have served, as a son with a father, in *preaching* the *truth*, and *administring* the *ordinances* of the gospel. Carefully examine your own hearts, as those who *know* you *must* give a solemn account at the last day, respecting the manner in which you have *improved* his serious labours, and acted towards him for these forty-eight years of his settlement among you. O, how awful will it be for *unconverted* sinners, who have *trifled* with his warnings, persuasions, and prayers, to find him appearing, as a swift witness against them, on *that day*, when God will judge the secrets of

men according to the gospel! How dreadful will it be for *false professors*, who have only a *name to live*, to find that his solemn and affectionate exhortations to examine themselves, whether they were in the faith, have been *rejected* or *forgot*, and are made the *means* of increasing their guilt and misery! I *hope* better things of *many* here; even things which accompany salvation, though I thus speak. I *know* I address *some*, who love his memory now, and hope to be happy with him in heaven. Be careful, my friends, to act in the church, and in the world, worthy the character of those who have been *so long* favoured with "a teacher sent from "God," whose highest ambition was to lead you into happiness, by "presenting *every one* of you "perfect in Christ Jesus." I need not say *much* respecting the *character* of this truly good and excellent man, who is transplanted from the church below, to flourish in the courts above. His *works* praise him. Ye have fully known his doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, and patience. If he does not live in *your memory*, as a society, you are guilty of the basest ingratitude. Your fathers can inform you of the involved state of this church, when he first became its pastor: remember that it was *principally* rectified by his prudence, kindness, and generosity. There were *two* qualifications which *almost* wholly constituted

tuted his religion : I mean, fervent zeal for the doctrine of atonement, through the death of Christ ; and for conformity to his example, as a Saviour who was meek and lowly. It is true, that our dear friend (like his adorable master) found enemies; but they were only such, as were enemies to truth and peace, decency and goodness. With all their base usage, they, instead of injuring *him*, only gave him an opportunity of shewing, how much he was possessed by the prudence of the serpent, tempered with the harmlessness of the dove, and inspired by a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God, of great price. Though he was justly respectable for his education, useful learning, and honourable ancestry, yet, he had *true ambition* enough not to *value* himself on *these* things : he rather sought to be esteemed, as “ a good man, and a just.” You have lost a minister, who earnestly desired your improvement in the divine life, and your final salvation. I am persuaded, his *last* wishes concerning you, were, that you might cleave to the atonement and example of Jesus, and *live* in love and peace, that the GOD of love and peace may be with you. I have a right to *demand* your prayers, on account of that additional weight, which devolves upon me, through the removal of my reverend friend, and father in the ministry. I consider myself, as the pastor and minister of this *church* and *congregation* ; not *merely*, of a few
 assuming

suffering individuals; and, through the grace of God, am resolved neither to be *bribed*, or *intimidated* to *betray* the trust you have reposed in me. It shall be my *concern*, and I hope will ever be my *practice*, not to think *any interest* that of *religion*, except it is the interest of *truth*, and goodness, and honour. I will always endeavour to *deserve* your esteem; but will do nothing to obtain it, which my own conscience censures.

3. I cannot end this discourse, without expressing my sympathy with the *near* and much-affected relations of our friend, who is not dead, but only “fallen asleep in Jesus.”—I would not *open*, but rather endeavour to *close* those wounds, which this affliction hath made in your breasts. Suppose, my friends, you had a near relation in any foreign kingdom, however remote, who was exalted to the summit of human honour, and was filled with kind affection towards you; you would love to *think* of him, and say, even though you had no hopes of seeing him,—this dignified person is my father, and my friend! I scarcely need apply this. If you hope your friend is gone before to the Father, and that he cannot have less affection for you, than he had on earth; you should *rejoice*, in his happiness and honour, and even *glory* in being related to *one*, whom you believe to be an inhabitant of paradise. You may comfort yourselves in the thought, that you shall see him again; and that he who knows your frames, is
willing

willing to assist you, if ye resolve, in
of grace, not to be slothful, but for
those, who, through faith and patience,
herit the promises. Let those who profess
to the memory of this dear deceased man of God
endeavour to shew it, by walking as he hath
walked. True love, naturally produces imita-
tion. Those who *resemble* our departed friend,
will adorn the gospel of Jesus, and do honour to
human nature:—they will shew, that good nature
and good sense, urbane politeness, and refined
piety, are qualifications which may *each* appear
conspicuous in a christian; and be mutual *helps*
and *ornaments* to each other. If hoary hairs come
upon them, old age will not be contemptible and
insignificant: like wine drawn from its lees, and
refined by a long space of time, they will lose the
heat and fermentation of improper qualities, and
be *justly* prized, for their mildness, brightness,
and superior worth. Bereaved relations may re-
member, that the God in whom they trust, can
speak comfortably unto them, and be their friend
and father in this wilderness. His gospel, and
the grace of his holy Spirit, are as *free*, and as
suitable for us, as for those who have gone before
us into heaven. The more we apply to God, in
the use of means, for purification, and a sanctified
use of afflictions, the more may we hope to find,
that the grace of Christ is sufficient for us, and
his strength is made perfect in weakness.

My

ye will all be ready to say, *amen*. — The church and the world
 sustained a great loss, but yet, we *must* go
 that another good man is gone to the bar.
 Can you rejoice in the happiness of a glo-
 rified Christian, and yet be *careless* respecting
 your *own* eternal happiness? Remember, that
 you *must* die *certainly*, and *may* die *very soon*. — If
 you reject the gospel, you offend the eternal Fa-
 ther, you crucify afresh his blessed Son, and re-
 sist the offered grace of his holy Spirit: if you
 die, in your present state, the wrath of God which
 abideth on you, will sink you into hell with all its
 horrors! — Jesus now proffers unto you pardon,
 peace, and blessings for both worlds. He saith,
 “ *Who so cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast*
 “ *out.* ” “ *O taste and see that the Lord is gra-*
 “ *cious; blessed is the man who trusteth in*
 “ *him.* ”



THE END.